



Migrants at Lesbos' port waiting to get on to a ship to Athens. © IOM/Amanda Nero 2015

2015 GLOBAL MIGRATION TRENDS

FACTSHEET



IOM's Global Migration
Data Analysis Centre
GMDAC



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency

Foreword

This factsheet provides an overview of key global migration trends, based on the available statistics, as gathered from a variety of sources. The document summarizes key facts and figures on a range of migration-related topics, covering the period January–December 2015, depending on data availability and comparability. Although this factsheet is by no means exhaustive, it presents a broad picture of the state of migration around the world.

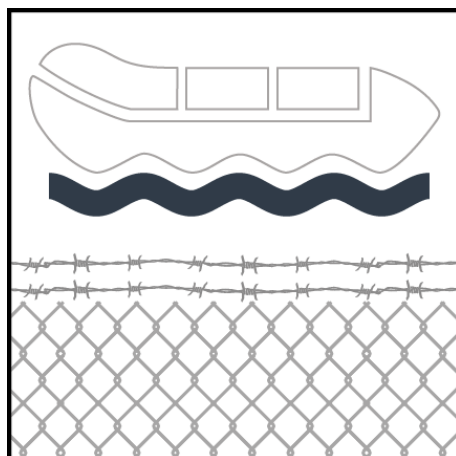
KEY TRENDS 2015



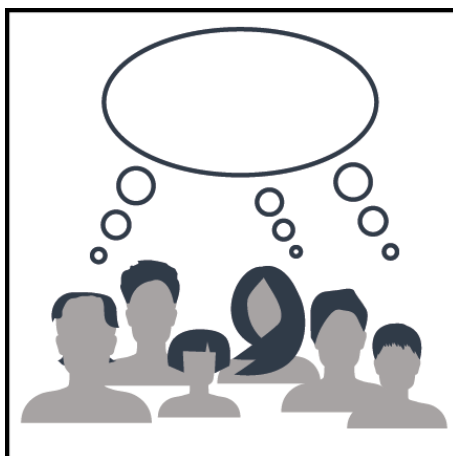
65.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced by conflict and violence by the end of 2015, of whom 21.3 million across international borders (UNHCR).



Minors represented nearly 20% of first-time asylum applicants in the EU-28 in 2015, and more than 1/3 of forced labour victims worldwide (Eurostat, ILO).



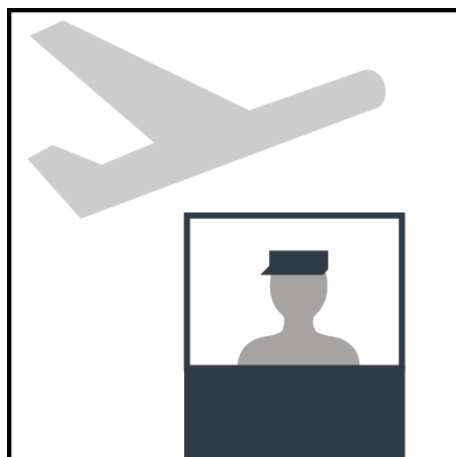
More than 5,700 migrants died or went missing during migration in 2015, an increase of about 9% compared to 2014 (IOM).



In almost every region of the world people are more likely to be in favour of migration than against it. The one, notable exception to this is Europe (IOM-Gallup).



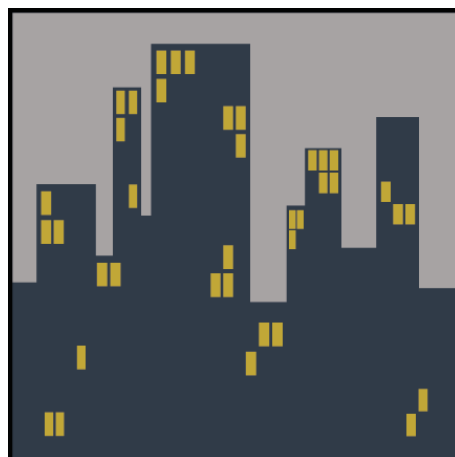
Germany became the single largest recipient of new individual asylum claims globally, with 441,800 registered by the end of 2015 (Eurostat).



The number of assisted voluntary returns from the EU exceeded that of forced returns (Frontex and IOM).



Annual remittance inflows dropped slightly to an estimated USD 580.6 billion. Three-quarters of this was sent to low and middle income economies (World Bank).



Almost one in five of the world's migrants live in the top 20 largest cities (IOM).

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: STOCK, CHARACTERISTICS, GEOGRAPHY¹

Over 1 billion people in the world are **migrants**, or more than 1 in 7 people globally. The figure includes the stock of **international migrants** – people residing in a country other than their country of birth – whose number reached **244 million in 2015**, up by 41 per cent since 2000;² and it includes **internal migrants** – around **740 million**, according to 2009 UNDP estimates,³ of whom over 150 million are rural–urban migrants in China.⁴ However, the proportion of international migrants in the world population is only slightly higher than that recorded over the past decades, at 3.3 per cent compared to 2.8 per cent in 2000, and 3.2 per cent in 2013.

Women account for 48 per cent of the global international migrant stock,⁵ although the share varies widely across major regions: for instance, the figure is lower in Asia (42%) due to the recent large increase in the stock of male migrants in the region, while it is higher in Europe (52.4%) and Northern America (51.2%). Migrants in the North are on average older than migrants in the South, with a median age of 43 years relative to 33 in the South, and most international migrants are of working age (72% of the global migrant stock). The average **age** of the international migrant stock is 39, and 15 per cent (37 million) of all international migrants are below the age of 20.

About 51 per cent of international migrants reside in 10 countries. The most popular destination country is the United States, where 46.6 million foreign-born officially resided in 2015, followed by Germany (12 million), the Russian Federation (11.9 million), Saudi Arabia (10.2 million), the United Kingdom (8.5 million), the United Arab Emirates (8.1 million), Canada and France (7.8 million each), Australia (6.7 million) and Spain (5.8 million). The top five countries by size of their diasporas (number of international migrants living abroad) in 2015 were India (15.6 million), Mexico (12.4 million), the Russian Federation (10.6 million), China (9.5 million), and Bangladesh (7.2 million).

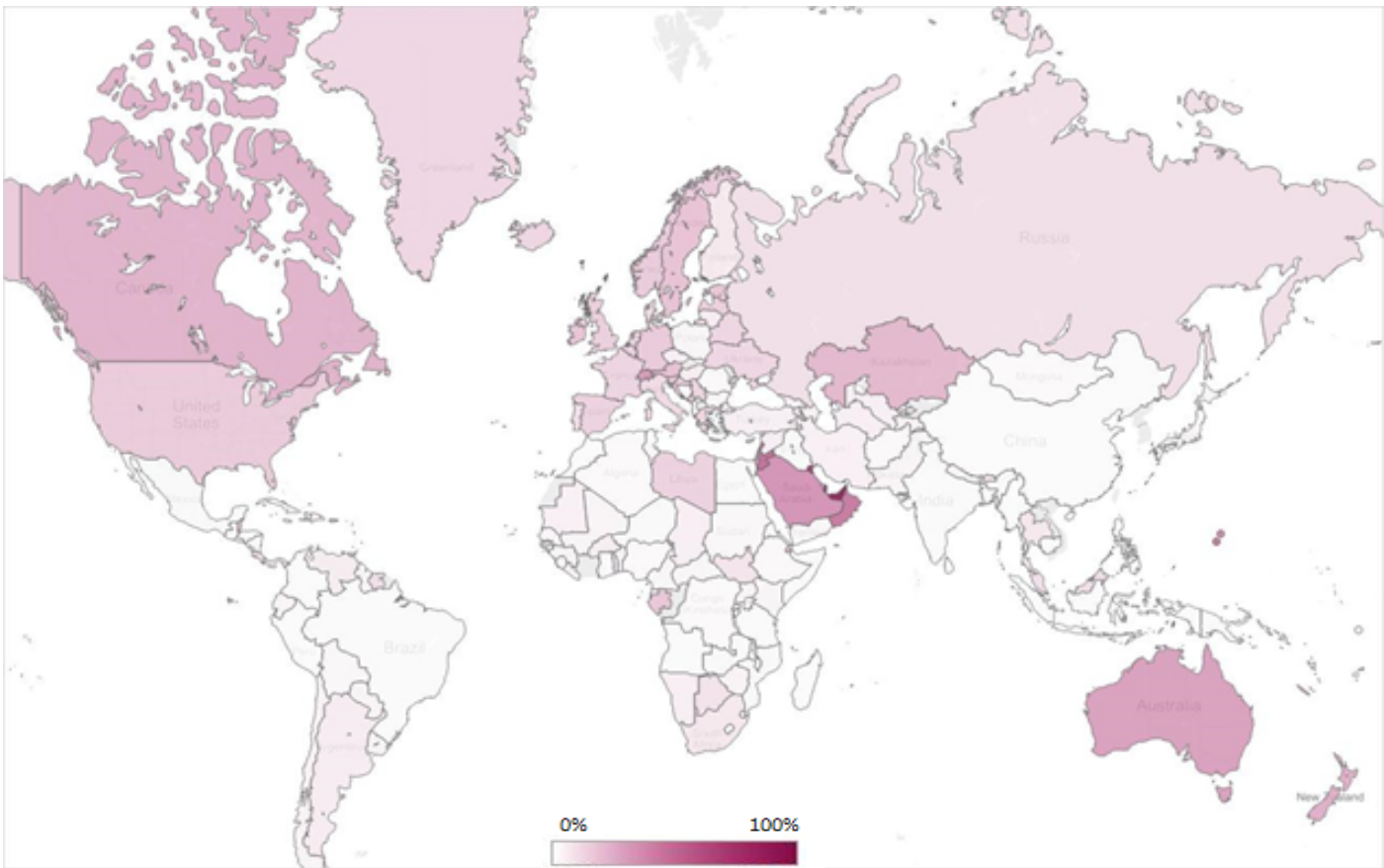
The proportion of international migrants in the **destination countries** varies significantly across States. It is generally lower in countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (1.5% on average), as well as countries in Central, Eastern and Southeast Asia – with some exceptions, e.g. Singapore, where over 45 per cent of the population is composed of international migrants. Higher proportions are found in Europe (10% on average), with countries in Northern and Western Europe having the highest shares (e.g. 17.5% in Austria, almost 17% in Sweden, and about 15% in Germany); Northern America (15.2% in the United States and almost 22% in Canada), Oceania (20.6% – with over 28% of the Australian population being foreign-born), and Western Asia (14.8%). International migrants constitute substantial portions of the total population in most Gulf Cooperation Council countries – 88.4 per cent in the United Arab Emirates, 75.5 per cent in Qatar, 73.6 per cent in Kuwait and over 51 per cent in Bahrain.

Among the countries with a significant **proportion of their population abroad** are some States in the European and Eastern Asia regions – e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, with over 43 per cent of its nationals residing abroad, Albania (about 39%), and Armenia (over 31%), as well as Portugal (over 22%) and Ireland (19%). In Latin America and the Caribbean region, countries like Mexico, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Paraguay have between 10 to 12 per cent of their citizens abroad. Almost 18 per cent of the New Zealand population resides abroad; in the African region, the share is 19 per cent for Somalia and close to 10 per cent for the Central African Republic.

Figure 1: Share of emigrants as a percentage of total population of country of origin, 2015



Figure 2: Share of immigrants as a percentage of total population of country of destination, 2015



Source: IOM calculations based on UN DESA (International Migrant Stock, 2015), and World Bank, World Development Indicators (country's total population in 2014).

In 2015, **South–South migration exceeded South–North migration** by two percentage points, representing 37 per cent of the total international migrant stock. 90.2 million international migrants born in developing countries resided in developing countries in 2015, compared to 82.2 million in 2013.

Figure 3: Distribution of international migrants, by origin and destination, 2015

Direction	Stock (million)	% of total international migrant stock
South --> South	90.2	37%
South --> North	85.3	35%
North --> North	55.2	23%
North--> South	13.6	5%

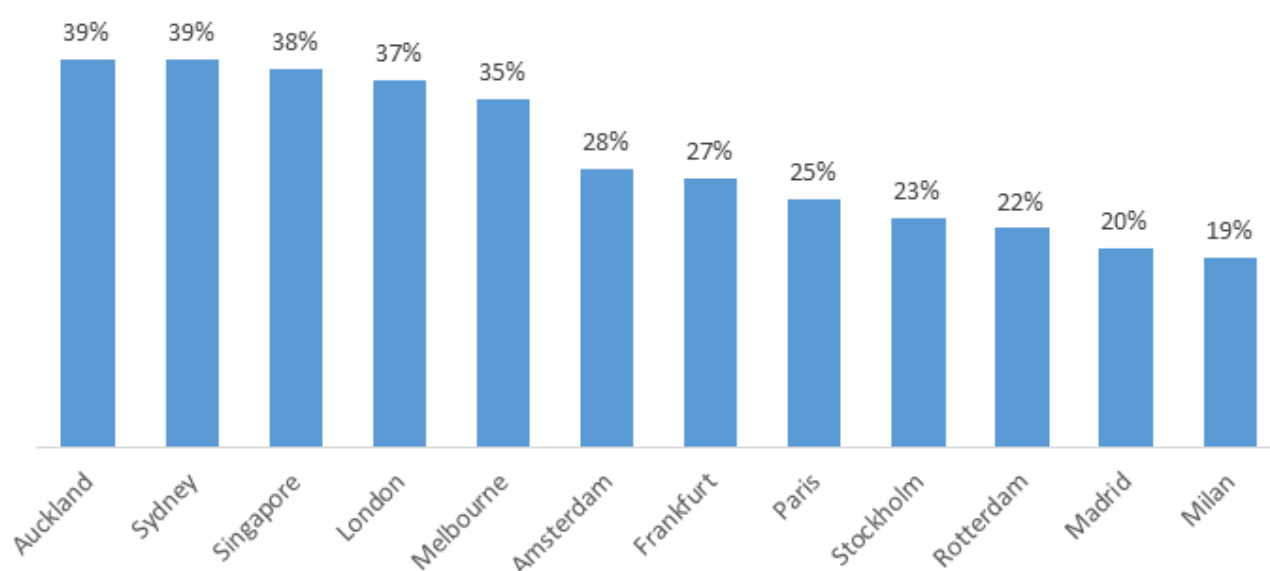
Source: UN DESA, 2015.

The latest available estimates for the number of international migrant workers to date are still based on 2013 (mostly census) data: **over 150 million international migrants were migrant workers in 2013**, according to ILO Estimates, or about two thirds of the total international migrant stock. Over half of them were men (83.7 million), while just over 44 per cent were women (66.6 million). Migrants have higher labour force participation rates than non-migrants, particularly due to higher participation rates for migrant women relative to non-migrant women.⁷

While labour migration is a universal phenomenon, some regions have far higher proportions of migrant workers relative to all workers: over one in three workers are migrant workers in Arab States, and about one in five in Northern America – as opposed to 0.6 per cent in Eastern Asia (including China), and 1–1.5 per cent in Southern Asia (including India), Northern Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Close to one in five migrants in the world live in the top 20 largest cities globally, according to IOM's *World Migration Report 2015*; the report also found that in many of these cities migrants make up at least one third of the total population, and that migrants tend to concentrate in global cities – for instance almost 50 per cent of Canada's foreign-born population lives in Toronto.

Figure 4: Foreign-born population in major cities



Source: IOM World Migration Report, 2015.

FORCED MIGRATION

By the end of 2015, **65.3 million** individuals were **forcibly displaced** worldwide due to persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. This reflects an increase in absolute terms of **5.8 million** people over 2014, and represents the greatest level of forced displacement ever recorded.⁸

The total figure includes **21.3 million refugees** (16.1 million under UNCHR's mandate, and 5.2 million Palestinian refugees assisted by UNRWA), **40.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs)** and **3.2 million asylum-seekers**. The figure does not include an additional **19.2 million newly displaced by natural disasters** across 113 countries during 2015 (a number based on flow data and therefore not directly comparable with the previous stock figures).⁹

Refugees

By the end of 2015, the world was hosting **21.3 million refugees** – 16.1 million of whom were under UNHCR's mandate.¹⁰ The number of refugees has seen a 55%-increase since the end of 2011, largely due to the civil conflict in the **Syrian Arab Republic**. During 2015 alone, some **1.8 million** people became refugees, compared to 1.2 million in 2014.¹¹

Turkey and **Pakistan** are the main refugee-hosting countries globally (in absolute terms), with, respectively, **2.5 million** and **1.6 million** refugees registered in the countries by the end of 2015; they are followed by Lebanon (1.1 million), the Islamic Republic of Iran (979,400) and Ethiopia (736,100).¹²

In its fifth year of civil conflict, the Syrian Arab Republic was the largest refugee-producing country by the end of 2015, with a refugee population of 4.9 million. During the second half of 2015, the number of refugees from the country grew by about 700,000 people, according to UNHCR figures. The vast majority of Syrian refugees were hosted by countries neighbouring the Syrian Arab Republic – namely Turkey (2.5 million), Lebanon (1.1 million), Jordan (628,200), Iraq (244,600) and Egypt (117,600).¹³

Afghanistan continues to be a major country of origin for refugees, with a refugee population estimated at 2.7 million at the end of 2015. Somalia follows as the third refugee-producing country, with over 1 million refugees.¹⁴

Conflict-induced internal displacement

People who were **internally displaced due to conflict and violence** were estimated at **40.8 million** by the end of 2015. This represents the **highest number on record** and an increase of **2.6 million** people compared to the end of 2014. The figure includes **8.6 million newly displaced** people in 2015 only.¹⁵

Yemen saw the highest level of conflict- and violence-induced displacement in 2015, with **over 2.5 million** people displaced due to the exacerbation of conflict in the country – relative to about 330,000 at the beginning of the year. **Yemen and other 5 countries** accounted for **84%** of the total number of **newly displaced** worldwide in 2015 – namely Iraq, Ukraine, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan.

Colombia was the country with the largest IDP population worldwide by the end of 2015, with **6.9 million** people displaced within the country. It was followed by the **Syrian Arab Republic** – which counted about **6.6 million IDPs** at the end of 2015, more people than those seeking international protection – and **Iraq** (4.4 million), where the rise of the Islamic State and other non-State armed groups caused an increase in internal forced movements. The country was followed by **Sudan** (3.2 million IDPs) and **Nigeria** (2.2 million, particularly in the North-East region), both due to increased insecurity and human rights violations.¹⁶

Asylum-seekers

The number of asylum-seekers has consistently grown over the last four years and is at a record high. **Asylum claims globally** (pending cases) **reached about 3.2 million at the end of 2015**, compared to almost 1 million in the first half of 2015. According to UNHCR records, **Germany exceeded the Russian Federation and became the largest single recipient of first-time individual asylum claims globally**, with 441,899 new requests in 2015 – 158,657 of which were from individuals from the Syrian Arab Republic. The country was followed by the United States, which received about 172,700 applications (mostly from nationals of Mexico and other countries in Central America), Sweden (156,354), and the Russian Federation (151,131 mostly from Ukrainian nationals).¹⁷

The **EU-28** as a whole received **nearly 1.3 million new asylum claims in 2015**, more than double the number of asylum claims in 2014 (562,680),¹⁸ as reported by Eurostat, the EU's leading statistical body. As mentioned, Germany was the main country of first asylum claims in 2015, followed in the EU context by Hungary (174,425), Sweden (156,110), Austria (85,505), Italy (83,245), and France (70,570).¹⁹

In 2015, almost **one in three** first-time asylum-applicants in the EU-28 were **minors** (368,010), a 9 per cent increase from 2014.²⁰ One in four of all minor asylum-seekers in 2015 were considered by national authorities to be unaccompanied (96,465), triple the number recorded in 2014, and the highest number on record since 2008. More than half of the total number of new asylum applications were from people aged 18–34 – hence the great majority of asylum-seekers in the EU are of young age.

Disaster induced internal displacement

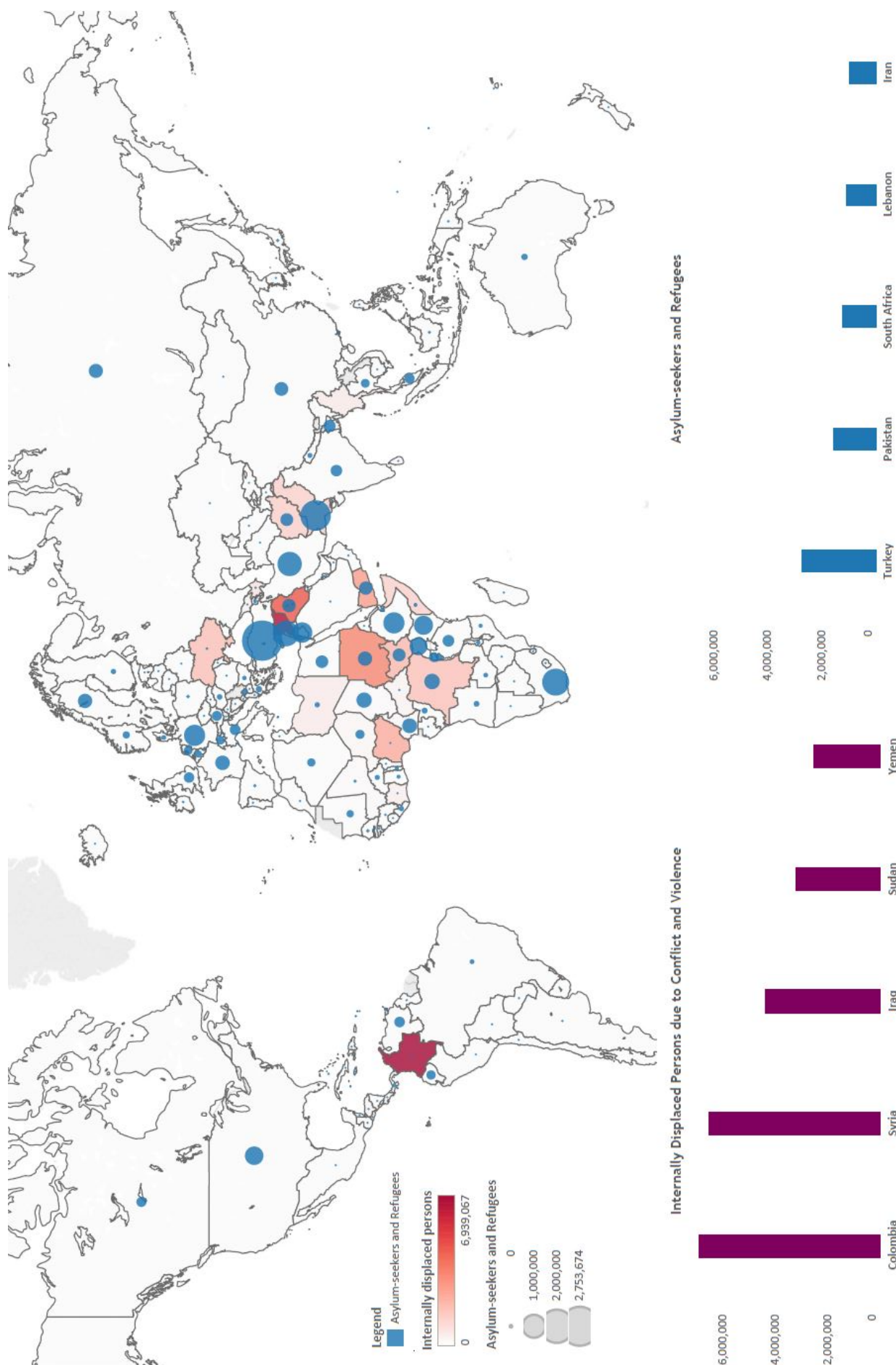
More than 19.2 million people were displaced by disasters in over 110 countries over the course of 2015.²¹ Between 2008 and 2014, an average of 26.4 million people per year were displaced by disasters. 87 per cent of disaster-induced displacement in 2014 occurred in Asia, with approximately 16.7 million people being forced to leave their homes during that year. The majority of displaced people globally were displaced by weather-related disasters, only a small minority by geophysical hazards. **The likelihood of being displaced by a disaster today is 60 per cent higher than four decades ago.**²²

Resettlement

In 2015, refugees from about 65 countries were resettled to 33 third countries from 87 countries of first asylum, according to UNHCR figures.²³ In the same year, there were just over **134,000 individual submissions for resettlement**, and **81,893 actual departures**; both figures were higher than those recorded in 2014 (almost 104,000 submissions and just over 73,300 departures), and represent the **highest figures since 2012**. Main beneficiaries of UNHCR resettlement programmes in 2015, based on number of submissions, were nationals from the Syrian Arab Republic (53,305), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (20,527), Iraq (11,161), Somalia (10,193) and Myanmar (9,738). The main countries of resettlement were the United States and Canada, with, respectively, 52,583 and 10,236 individuals resettled during the year, followed by Australia (5,211), Norway (2,220) and the United Kingdom (1,768).

More than 126,000 refugees and other vulnerable individuals were resettled under IOM auspices in 2015. This compares to the 121,784 individuals assisted by IOM's resettlement programmes in 2014. The figure for IOM-assisted resettlement operations is not directly comparable with UNHCR numbers, as this includes persons participating in (national) humanitarian admission schemes, whilst UNHCR data largely excludes such group. It is important to note that a higher number of countries around the world are participating in regular and ad hoc resettlement and humanitarian admission schemes, such as Italy, Republic of Korea and Germany.

Figure 5: Forced displacement globally: refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons due to conflict and violence, 2015* (Click anywhere on map to access interactive, online version)



*Source: IOM visualization based on UNHCR, Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2015. Figures of asylum-seekers based on persons whose asylum claim was pending as of the end of December 2015, regardless of the stage in the procedure. The term internally displaced persons (IDPs) refers to individuals assisted by UNHCR, including people in IDP-like situations (with similar protection risks but not reported as IDPs). Stocks recorded for as of the end of December 2015 or latest available estimates. For more information see: <http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7>. The map does not include people newly displaced by disasters during the same period as this is a flow-type of data, therefore not directly comparable with stocks of refugees, asylum-seekers (pending cases) and conflict-induced IDPs.



IOM in South Sudan. © IOM

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Irregular migration is hardly quantifiable or measurable, given its clandestine nature, the lack of data sources and of a universally agreed definition, and its highly dynamic character (e.g. migrants in an irregular situation can be regularized, and migrants entering a country regularly can become irregular upon expiration of their stay permits).

The most recent global estimate of irregular migration suggests that there were **at least 50 million irregular migrants worldwide in 2010**, a large number of whom rely on smuggling services.²⁴



Truck packed with migrants heading to Libya crosses Agadez on its way to Tourayat, Nigerien village. The town of Agadez in the Sahara is a hub for West African migrants travelling to Libya, Algeria and Europe. © IOM/Amanda Nero 2016

Estimates of the irregular migrant population exist for some countries, although they are hardly comparable being based on different methodologies and indicators across countries. An estimated 11.1 million undocumented migrants lived in the United States in 2014, according to calculations from the Pew Research Centre, based on US Government data – a stable number compared to the previous five years and to the 2007 peak of 12.2 million; the decrease was largely due to lower immigration from Mexico during the economic recession of 2007–2009. Estimates from the same centre also suggested that about 66 per cent of the 2014 irregular migrant population had lived in the United States for at least ten years.²⁵

In the Russian Federation, estimates from the Federal Migration Service indicated that there were 3 million irregular migrants in the country in 2013.²⁶ An IOM report, "Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A global review of the emerging evidence base", details the extent of irregular migration in other regions globally: in Asia, for instance, estimates suggested that there were some 4 million undocumented migrants in Pakistan in 2013, and about one million undocumented workers in Malaysia in 2006; other Latin American, Asian and African countries host significant irregular migrant populations, although the lack of reliable data and estimates make it impossible to assess the actual extent of irregular migration, and migrant smuggling trends in these regions.²⁷

The number of apprehensions along international borders – one of the most reliable indicators of irregular migration – has increased substantially when looking at the European Union.²⁸ According to Frontex, irregular arrivals to Europe almost tripled between 2013 and 2014, from about 100,000 to 280,000; the number increased six-fold between 2014 and 2015, with over 1.8 million irregular arrivals registered by the agency, both by land and sea.²⁹ It is important to highlight, however, that this number may be an overestimate, due to double-counting issues, as reported by the same agency: for instance, multiple crossings by the same individual along the same border or several borders along the journey may be counted more than once, generating an overestimate in the number of arrivals to Europe. Therefore, such numbers should be interpreted with caution.³⁰

That irregular migration flows to Europe increased compared to previous years is a reality; this is mostly attributable to the surge in migrant crossings along the Eastern Mediterranean route (from Turkey to the EU via Greece, Bulgaria or Cyprus), which became by far the main route of entry to Europe for migrants and asylum-seekers, as opposed to the Central Mediterranean Route (from North Africa to Italy and Malta), which was the predominant route in 2014.

Greece was by far the main entry point of undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers to Europe in 2015. Irregular arrivals to Greece surpassed 900,000 in 2015, and were eleven times higher than in 2014 (77,163), with over 93 per cent of migrants arriving by sea (853,650).³¹ Syrians accounted for over 50 per cent of irregular arrivals in Greece in 2015.³² Together, Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis made up over 88 per cent of all irregular arrivals to the country.³³

In 2015, a total of 153,842 people arrived by sea to Italy, a decrease from 170,000 in 2014, yet still a large increase compared to the 42,925 arrivals recorded by national authorities in 2013.³⁴ Most migrant arriving to Italy by sea in 2015 were from Eritrea (39,162) and Nigeria (22,237), followed by Somalia (12,433), Sudan (8,932), the Gambia (8,454), Syrian Arab Republic (7,448), and Mali (5,307). The large majority made the sea crossing from Libya (about 80–90%), while the rest departed from Egypt (mostly Egyptians and Syrians).

However, it must be noted that most irregular migrants currently residing in Europe are visa overstayers, who entered the EU regularly.³⁵ An estimated stock of 1.9 million to 3.8 million undocumented migrants resided in the EU-27 in 2008, according to estimates from the EC Clandestino project.³⁶

FORCED AND VOLUNTARY RETURN

In 2015, a total of **175,220** individuals were **forcibly or voluntarily returned** to their countries of origin or third countries from the 28 EU Member States, plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, according to figures registered by Frontex.³⁷ This represents an almost 9 per cent increase over 2014 figures (161,309) and the highest number recorded since 2011. However, when compared to the large fluctuations in irregular border crossings and apprehensions across EU countries, the number of actual returns has remained fairly stable. Notably, for the first time since 2012, the number of voluntary returns as recorded by Frontex exceeded that of forced returns (81,681 over 72,473). Main countries of origin of individuals who were forcibly returned and whose nationalities were recorded by national authorities were Albania, Morocco, Kosovo,³⁸ Serbia and the Syrian Arab Republic. Individuals who returned voluntarily in 2015, according to Frontex, were mainly from Ukraine, India, Kosovo, Albania and Pakistan.

However, it should be noted that the number of **IOM-assisted voluntary returns**, as reported by Frontex in 2015 – 14,391 – is significantly lower than the number of assisted voluntary returns from EU countries (plus Norway and Switzerland) recorded by IOM in the same year – **almost 56,000**. Such a discrepancy may be due to various reasons, including the fact that Frontex figures on effective assisted voluntary returns are not disaggregated by type of operation – i.e. whether they are IOM-assisted or not – for a few countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland and the Netherlands). It seems that a significant number of IOM-assisted voluntary return cases are not reported on by Frontex.

In the data from the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shows that a total **462,463 removals and returns** were conducted in fiscal year 2015 (1 October 2014–30 September 2015).³⁹ The number of people removed or returned by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (under DHS) in the same year was 253,413, as opposed to 315,943 in FY 2014 – an almost 20 per cent decrease. The main countries of origin of individuals who were forcibly returned were Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Removal and return figures by ICE have been on a decreasing trend since FY 2012, when 409,849 removals were operated. Such a trend is due to a significant decrease in the number of apprehensions at the border, in turn reflective of lower numbers of people attempting to cross the US border irregularly. The total number of apprehensions (both at the border and within the State territory) in FY 2015 was 337,413, a 30 per cent decrease on FY 2014 numbers.⁴⁰

In Australia, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection "assisted in or managed the departure of 16,026 people from Australia" during financial year 2014–2015 (1 July 2014–30 June 2015), a slight decrease on 2013–2014 figures (16,446). The numbers include voluntary returns, "the removal (voluntary and involuntary) of non-citizens held in immigration detention, including those who had arrived irregularly by sea, and the return of transferees from Regional Processing Centres" (centres for transferees and refugees in Nauru and Manus).⁴¹

In Canada, a total of 15,232 persons were removed from the country in 2013 (latest available figure), a 20 per cent decrease from 2012 levels (18,921 – the highest figure recorded between 2009 and 2013). The number includes foreign nationals and permanent residents found to be inadmissible to Canada, or who pose a threat to Canada (e.g. individuals involved in organized crime).⁴²

"It is time to engage the world to stop this violence against desperate migrants."

- IOM Director General, Ambassador Swing

Missing Migrants Project tracks deaths of migrants and those who have gone missing along migratory routes.

For the most up to date data, analysis and information, including 2016 and 2017 figures, please visit missingmigrants.iom.int



Italian Coast Guard rescues migrants and refugees bound for Italy.

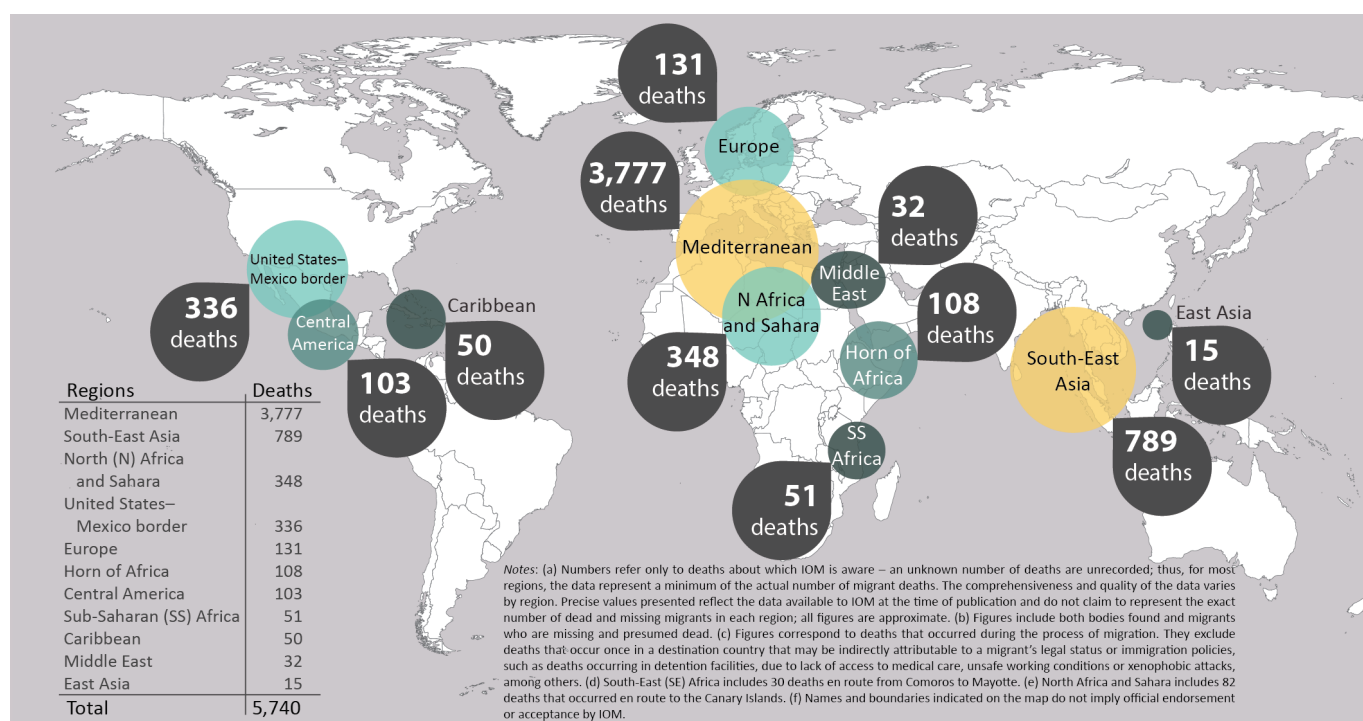
© IOM/Francesco Malavolta 2014

MIGRANT DEATHS

In 2015, at least 5,740 migrants lost their lives or went missing during migration. Of these fatalities, more than 3,770 occurred in the Mediterranean – a 15 per cent increase from fatalities recorded in 2014, though the overall rate of death in 2015 was lower. This is largely due to the predominance of the shorter and relatively safer Eastern Mediterranean route in 2015 as opposed to the Central Mediterranean, which was the main route in 2014.

Over three quarters of deaths in 2015 occurred along the Central Mediterranean route (an estimated 2,869). Almost 800 migrants are estimated to have died or gone missing in South-East Asia in 2015, nearly 70 per cent of these in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea.

Figure 6: Migrant fatalities globally, 2015



Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project, 26/09/2016. Data obtained from local authorities (coast guards, sheriff's offices, medical examiners), interviews with survivors provided by IOM field offices, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and media reports.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

An estimated **21 million individuals are victims of forced labour globally**, according to ILO.⁴³ The figure includes cases of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual or labour exploitation; however, **the real number of victims of human trafficking remains unknown**.

Over half of the estimated victims of forced labour are found in the Asia-Pacific region (11.7 million), followed by Africa (3.7 million) and Latin America (1.8 million). The Central and South-Eastern Europe region, together with the Commonwealth of Independent States count 1.6 million victims, while 1.5 million victims are estimated to be in the developed economies and the EU, and another 600,000 in the Middle East.⁴⁴

The same estimates suggest that **over a third of the victims of forced labour worldwide are minors**, and the majority are women and girls (11.4 million), particularly in the case of sexual exploitation (98% of the estimated 4.5 million victims of sexual trafficking); conversely, labour exploitation in the private economy appears to mostly concern males (60% of 14.2 million). Annual illegal profits generated by such exploitation of human beings are estimated at USD 150 billion, with yearly profits per victim ranging between USD 3,900 and 34,800.

According to the US State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons report, the **number of identified victims of trafficking globally in 2014** was 44,462 in 2014, relatively stable compared to the yearly average over the previous years.⁴⁵ Europe accounted for most of the identified cases (11,910 cases) followed by Africa (9,523 cases), the Western Hemisphere (8,414), East Asia and Pacific (6,349), South and Central Asia (4,878) and the Near East (3,388). In all regions, only a small proportion of identified cases are followed by convictions – less than one in ten on average globally.⁴⁶

It must be noted that human trafficking does not necessarily involve crossing of an international border; however, undocumented migrants crossing borders irregularly are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking.

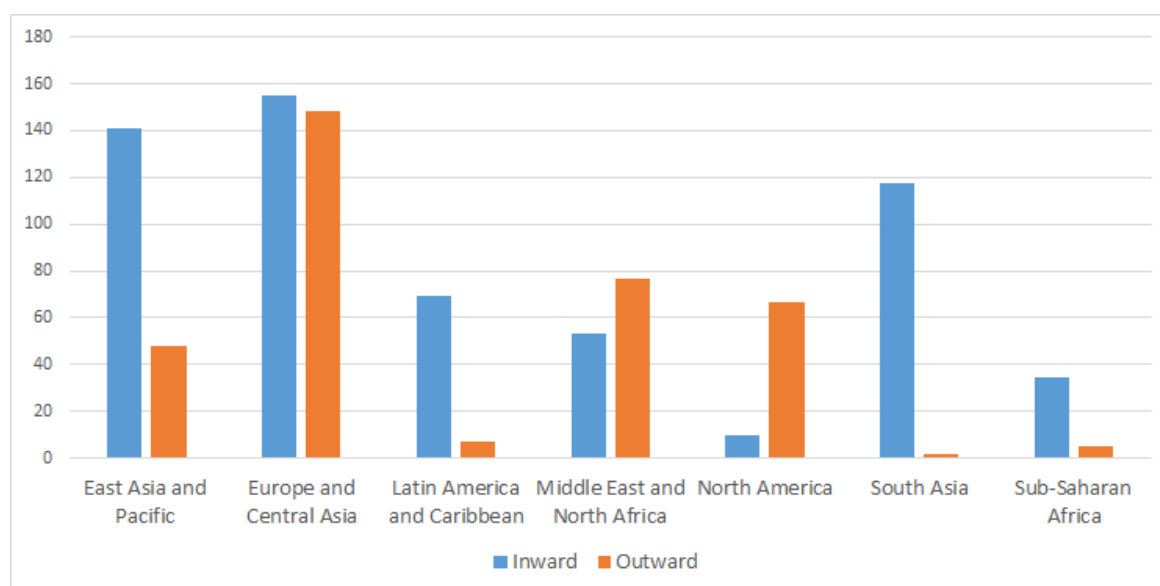
REMITTANCES

According to World Bank estimates, the **sum of financial remittances sent by international migrants back to their families in origin countries amounted to USD 581 billion in 2015**, of which **75 per cent (USD 437 billion) was sent to low and middle income economies**. This global estimate is down from an early projection for 2015 of USD 601 billion, as well as 2014's estimate of USD 597 billion. Despite this unexpected decrease, earnings remitted by international migrants in 2015 constituted a significant **portion of a some countries' GDPs** – e.g. about one-fourth for the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Moldova, and almost one-third for Liberia, Nepal and Tajikistan.⁴⁷ For low and middle income economies in 2014, remittance inflows measured **three times more than foreign aid** received by such countries in the same year.⁴⁸

In absolute terms, top recipients of migrant remittances in 2015 (according to the latest World Bank estimates) were India (USD 68 billion), China (USD 64 billion), the Philippines (USD 28 billion) and Mexico (USD 26 billion) – which were also among the countries with the largest diasporas globally in 2015. Estimates on remittance outflows for 2015 indicate that remittances were mostly sent from the United States (USD 61 billion) and Saudi Arabia (USD 39 billion) – also not surprising, given that such countries are among the top international migrant destinations worldwide.

At the regional level, Europe and Central Asia was the main recipient of remittances in 2015, with USD 155 billion, followed by East Asia and the Pacific (USD 141 billion), South Asia (USD 117 billion) and Latin America and the Caribbean (USD 69 billion). After Europe and Central Asia, which remitted USD 148 billion, the Middle East and North Africa region was the top remittance-sending region in 2015 (USD 98 billion), mostly due to increasing labour migration into the Gulf Cooperation Council countries over the past few years, particularly from Southeast Asia.⁴⁹

Figure 7: Inward and Outward Remittance Flows by Region, 2015 (US\$ billion)



Source: World Bank, Annual Inflow and Outflow Data, updated Oct 2016.

The global average cost of sending USD 200 globally fell to 7.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2015, from 8 per cent in the same period in 2014.⁵⁰ Reductions of the costs of sending remittances since 2005 are estimated to have created about USD 62.5 billion in savings for migrants and their families. However, much remains to be done, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where costs continue to be the highest, now standing at 9.5 per cent.

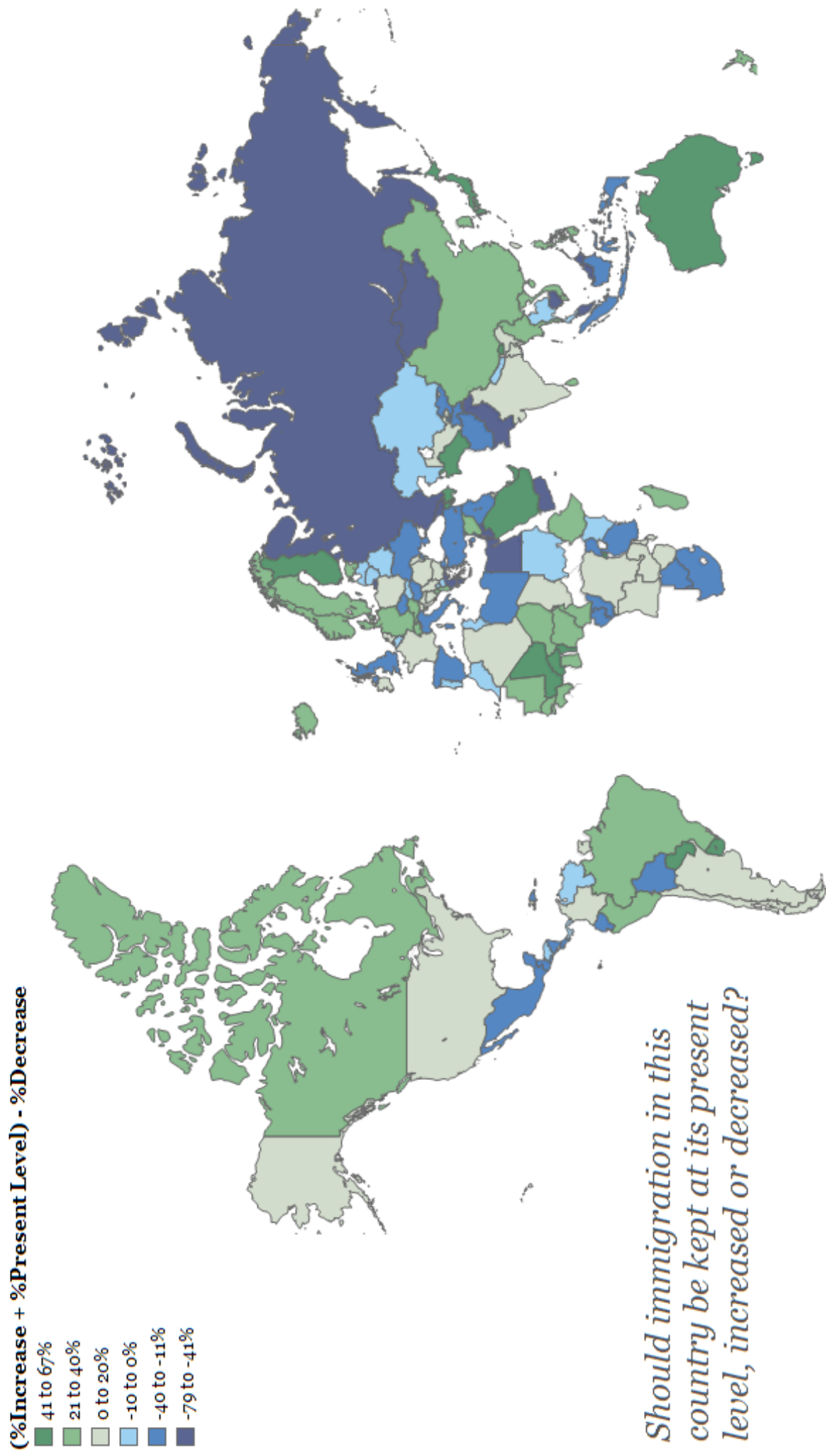
Reducing remittance costs, lowering recruitment costs of low-skilled migrant workers, and mobilizing diasporas for development will be important contributions towards the achievement of the post-2015 development goals; this is particularly so given that target 10.c regards the reduction of remittance costs to less than 3 per cent, and the elimination of remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent by 2030.

PUBLIC OPINION

Contrary to what is often portrayed in the media, in every region of the world – with the important exception of Europe – people are more likely to be in favour of migration than against it, according to findings of an IOM-Gallup report on public perceptions of migration worldwide.⁵¹ The findings were based on interviews with over 183,000 adults across more than 140 countries between 2012 and 2014, who were asked: 1) whether they wished to see immigration levels in their countries to increase, decrease or stay the same; and 2) whether they thought immigrants mostly take jobs that nationals want or do not want.

European residents were, on average, the most negative towards immigration globally, with a slight majority believing that immigration levels should be decreased (52%); however, there was a sharp divergence between Northern and Southern European countries, with the former being generally more favourable towards immigration – except for the United Kingdom – compared to the latter.

Figure 8: Attitudes towards immigration by region, 2012–2014



ENDNOTES

- (1) This section is based on data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Trends in International Migrant Stock, 2015 Revision), unless otherwise stated.
- (2) The figure is based on the UN definition of an international migrant as any person who changes his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least 3 months, as per the 1998 UN recommendations on Statistics of International Migration.
- (3) United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2009. See hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2009.
- (4) Chan, K. W. (2013), China: internal migration. In The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration. DOI: 10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm124
- (5) UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision.
- (6) ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers, 2015, See www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_436343/lang--en/index.htm.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) UNHCR (2016), Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015. See www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html.
- (9) Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Global Report on Internal Displacement. See www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2016/2016-global-report-internal-displacement-IDMC.pdf.
- (10) UNHCR, Global Trends. N.B., The total figure includes about 5 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) Ibid.
- (16) Ibid.
- (17) Ibid.
- (18) Eurostat, See <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>
- (19) National figures reported by Eurostat may differ slightly from those reported by UNHCR. It should also be noted that in Hungary, Serbia and Kosovo, the majority of asylum applications were lodged to facilitate transit across the country and were closed with no decision made. Gathering that many of these applicants then applied for asylum in another EU country, UNHCR removed these closed cases from the total asylum applications in Hungary, Serbia and Kosovo in order to avoid double counting. National figures reported on by Eurostat do not reflect such an adjustment.
- (20) Minors are considered to be 17 years of age or younger.
- (21) IDMC.
- (22) Ibid.
- (23) UNHCR (2016), Resettlement Factsheet 2015. See www.unhcr.org/524c31a09.html.
- (24) UNODC (2010), The Globalization of Crime – A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment. See www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2010_low_res.pdf.

- (25) Pew Research Centre, 2015 (2016 update). See www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/21/authorized-immigrant-population-stable-for-half-a-decade/.
- (26) Federal Migration Service of Russia.
- (27) IOM (2016), Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A global review of the emerging evidence base; Castles et al., Irregular Migration: Causes, Patterns and Strategies (In Omelaniuk (2012, ed.) Global Perspectives on Migration and Development, IOM–Springer).
- (28) Examples of other indicators are national regularization programmes and employer sanctions.
- (29) Frontex (2016), Annual Risk Analysis 2016.
- (30) Laczko et al. (2016), Migrant arrivals and deaths in the Mediterranean: What do the data really tell us, Forced Migration Review 51, 2016.
- (31) Data collated by IOM, based on report from the Hellenic Coast Guard and the Hellenic Police.
- (32) The share refers to arrivals on both land and sea borders.
- (33) Data from the Hellenic Coast Guard and the Hellenic Police.
- (34) Data from the Italian Ministry of Interior.
- (35) Hein de Haas (2016), The Case for Border Controls. See heindehaas.blogspot.de/2016/08/the-case-for-border-controls.html.
- (36) PICUM, 2013. See www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CMW/Discussions/2013/DGDMigrationData_PICUM_2013.pdf.
- (37) Frontex Annual Risk Analysis Report 2016, available at http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annula_Risk_Analysis_2016.pdf.
- (38) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
- (39) The figures include criminal removals, non-criminal removals and returns; a breakdown by type of return (forced or voluntary) is not available for the United States.
- (40) US Department of Homeland Security. See www.ice.gov/news/releases/dhs-releases-end-fiscal-year-2015-statistics.
- (41) Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection Annual Report 2014–2015. See www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/annual-reports/DIBP-Annual-Report-2014-15.pdf.
- (42) Canada Border Services Agency Annual Report 2012–2013. See www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/reports-rapports/pia-efvp/pa-lprp-20122013-eng.html; Canadian Border Services Agency Detentions and Removals Programs, November 2010. See www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/reports-rapports/ae-ve/2010/dr-rd-eng.html.
- (43) ILO. See www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/policy-areas/statistics/lang--en/index.htm.
- (44) Ibid.
- (45) See www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/.
- (46) Due to lack of uniform reporting mechanisms across countries, statistics in the TIP report are only estimates.
- (47) World Bank Migration and Development Brief, 26. See pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2016/4/661301460400427908/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief26.pdf; World Bank, Annual Remittances Inflow Data (updated as of Oct. 2016). See: www.knomad.org/docs/Migration_Development/remittancedatainflowsoct20160.xls
- (48) World Bank, based on remittance inflow data in 2014; World Bank, Annual Inflow Data, updated Oct 2016.
- (49) World Bank, Annual Inflow and Outflow Data, updated Oct 2016.
- (50) World Bank Remittance Prices Worldwide (RPW) database. As of the end of 2014, RPW is based on average prices calculated on 300 country corridors worldwide (35 remittance-sending countries to 99 remittance-receiving countries).
- (51) IOM–Gallup (2015). How the World Views Migration. See publications.iom.int/system/files/how_the_world_gallup.pdf.



Migrants watching the sea in Lesbos's port while they wait their ship to Athens. © IOM/Amanda Nero 2015

Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
International Organization for Migration
Taubenstr. 20-22
10117 Berlin
Germany

gmdac@iom.int
www.gmdac.iom.int



IOM's Global Migration
Data Analysis Centre
GMDAC



International Organization for Migration
The UN Migration Agency